

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MADRID 05615 191704Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 BIB-01 /051 W
-----044787 191717Z /50

O 191658Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4661
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 05615

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: :INT, SP
SUBJECT: SOCIALISTS WIN BOTH SENATORIAL BY-ELECTIONS

REF: MADRID 5420

1. SUMMARY: AS EXPECTED, THE OPPOSITION SOCIALIST PSOE
WON BOTH SENATORIAL BYELECTIONS MAY 17, IN A CONTEST
MARKED ABOVE ALL BY ABSTENTION RATES NEAR 50 IN BOTH
PROVINCES. EVERY PARTY CLAIMED SATISFACTION, THE OPPOSI-
TION SOCIALIST PSOE FOR HAVING WON, THE GOVERNMENT UCD FOR
HAVING SUFFERED LESS OF A DROP THAN THE PSOE, AND THE PCE
AND CONSERVATIVE AP FOR HAVING LARGELY HELD ONTO AND EVEN--
ESPECIALLY THE COMMUNISTS--EXPANDED THEIR VOTES DESPITE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MADRID 05615 191704Z

THE LOW TURNOUT. SINCE THE RESULTS FELL WITHIN EXPECTED
BOUNDS, WE SEE THEM AS NEUTRAL IN THEIR IMPACT ON POLITICAL
ANALYSIS AND PARTY STRATEGY. END SUMMARY

2. IN THAT THE CONTESTS WERE SEEN AS DEMONSTRATIONS OF
HOW PARTY STRENGTH HAS FARED SINCE THE JUNE 1977 ELECTIONS,
THE BASIS OF COMPARISON USED BY ALMOST ALL OBSERVERS WAS

THE PREVIOUS CONGRESS OF DEPUTIES RACE, THE PREVIOUS SENATE ELECTIONS IN BOTH PROVINCES HAVING BEEN OBSCURED BY JOINT OR OVERLAPPING CANDIDACIES. THIS IS SCIENTIFICALLY IMPERFECT, BUT HAS PREVAILED IN THE POST-ELECTION COMMENT. ON THAT BASIS, THE PSOE (CUM PSP-SEE REFTTEL), WHILE WINNING BY COMFORTABLE MARGINS, SAW ITS PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE DROP FROM OVER 42 TO LESS THAN 35 IN ALICANTE AND FROM OVER 39 TO LESS THAN 33 IN ASTURIAS. ITS RAW VOTE, JUST OVER 120 THOUSAND IN BOTH PROVINCES, WAS OFF FROM A PREVIOUS 237 THOUSAND IN ALICANTE AND 219 THOUSAND IN ASTURIAS. THE UCD HELD SLIGHTLY BETTER OVERALL, KEEPING 108 THOUSAND OUT OF 198 THOUSAND IN ALICANTE BUT ONLY 87 THOUSAND OUT OF 175 THOUSAND IN ASTURIAS (DROPS OF 3.4 AND 7.6 PERCENTAGE POINTS RESPECTIVELY). THE COMMUNISTS ADDED 6500 VOTES IN ALICANTE, FOR A NEW TOTAL OF JUST OVER 57 THOUSAND, AND WENT FROM 58 TO 86 THOUSAND IN ASTURIAS, LESS THAN 1000 BEHIND THE UCD. THE AP ADDED SLIGHTLY TO ITS ALICANTE VOTE FOR A NEW TOTAL OF 36 THOUSAND, WHILE IN ASTURIAS IT TURNED OUT 55 THOUSAND, DOWN FROM THE PREVIOUS 76 THOUSAND BUT UP IN PERCENTAGE (13.6 TO 14.7) BECAUSE OF THE LOW OVERALL VOTE.

3. THE PSOE CLAIMED COMPLETE SATISFACTION WITH ITS TWO VICTORIES, BLAMING THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE LOW TURNOUT (FOR FAILING TO ADVERTISE THAT WORKERS GOT FOUR PAID HOURS OFF TO VOTE) AND ASSERTING THE RESULTS HERALDED A CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MADRID 05615 191704Z

PSOE SWEEP IN THE (STILL TO BE SCHEDULED) MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. UCD LEADERS EXPRESSED PLEASURE IN THEIR PARTY'S RELATIVELY SMALLER DROP-OFF, AND ALSO NOTED THEIR NEW PARTY MACHINERY APPEARED TO HAVE FUNCTIONED WELL. AP AND PCE LEADERS, HOWEVER, AS WELL AS SOME PRESS COMMENT, CALLED THE HIGH ABSTENTION RATE A SHARP WARNING TO THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES AND THEIR PERFORMANCE TO DATE.

4. CERTAINLY THE TWO OUTSIDE PARTIES HAD GREATER CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION, ESPECIALLY THE COMMUNISTS, THE ONLY ONES TO SCORE AN ABSOLUTE IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR VOTE IN BOTH PROVINCES. IT HAD BEEN EXPECTED SINCE THE JUNE 1977 ELECTIONS THAT BOTH THESE PARTIES WOULD SHOW GROWTH IN SUBSEQUENT CONTESTS, BUT THE PCE IMPROVEMENT IN ASTURIAS STILL STIRRED COMMENT HERE. CONNECTED WITH IT, IN OUR VIEW, ARE NOT ONLY THE FACTORS BEHIND THE GENERAL EXPECTATION OF GROWTH FOR BOTH THE AP AND THE PCE (ATTRITION OF THE LEADERS, DISADVANTAGES OF BOTH PARTIES IN THE JUNE CONTEST, GREATER VOTER FIDELITY FOR THE OUTER PARTIES BUT SUCH ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS AS THE INTERVENING OPPORTUNITY FOR THE PCE TO BEEF UP ITS IMAGE OF MODERATION, AND THE REASSERTION OF ASTURIAS' TRADITIONAL IDENTITY AS A

COMMUNIST/SOCIALIST STRONGHOLD. WE DO NOT BELIEVE, NOR HAS ANYONE HERE SUGGESTED, THAT THE PCE'S ASTURIAS VOTE IS A MEASURE OF ITS NATIONAL STRENGTH.

5. IN SUM, THE RESULTS IN BOTH ELECTIONS FELL WITHIN EXPECTED BOUNDS: VICTORY FOR THE PSOE, A HIGH ABSTENTION RATE AFFECTING GRINCIPALLY THE TWO LARGER PARTIES, INDICATIONS OF GROWTH FOR THE TWO OUTER PARTIES, AND EXPRESSIONS OF SATISFACTION BY ALL CONCERNED. WE THEREFORE ENTICIPATE NO CHANGE IN THE FUNDAMENTAL STRATEGIES BEING PURSUED BY THE FOUR MAJOR PARTIES.
EATON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS, LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MADRID05615
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780211-0775
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780540/aaaabhvs.tel
Line Count: 127
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 70438c9a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MADRID 5420
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2639471
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOCIALISTS WIN BOTH SENATORIAL BY-ELECTIONS
TAGS: PINT, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/70438c9a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014